FACTS

Concerning the

Loyal Orange Institution.

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CONCERNING THE

Loyal Orange Institution

HISTORIANS of the Orange Society are divided in opinion as to the date of its origin. Some contending that it commenced with the "engagement of the Nobles, Knights, and Gentlemen of Exeter to assist the Prince of Orange in the defence of the Protestant Religion." This engagement was executed and entered into on the 12th November, 1688, seven days after King William III. had landed at Torbay. Others hold that it owes its inception to the society which undoubtedly existed in the Fourth Regiment of Foot (the King's Own) at the time of the Revolution and probably even before.

It is universally agreed that the Loyal Orange Institution as we know it now has been in existence con-

tinuously, with the exception of one or two breaks of very short duration, since the 21st September, 1795.

About the year 1784 a lawless confederacy exclusively Roman Catholic, called the Defenders, existed in several counties in Ireland. It eventually became merged in the notorious "United Irishmen." These Defenders being well organised committed all sorts of atrocities on isolated Protestants.

In the years 1794 and 1795 the outrages of the Defenders became general, and the Protestants associated for self-defence. A conflict took place at a spot called "The Diamond," in the Co. Armagh, in which the Defenders were signally defeated.

In commemoration of this success, and in order to band the Protestants together for self-preservation in future, the first regular Orange Lodge was formed on the 21st September, 1795, the evening of the Battle of the Diamond, as it is called. In the month of January, 1798, a Grand Lodge was formed in Dublin, with many of the highest in the land at its head.

The Orange organisation steadily gained strength until the Body was considered, in the North of Ireland, so numerous and effective that General Knox, commanding at the outbreak of the rebellion in 1798, assured the Government that to these ardent supporters of the Constitution the safety of Ulster might be confidently entrusted.

The Orangemen had placed their services at the disposal of the Government, and had been reviewed by General Knox, in Lurgan Demesne, to the number of 20,000. Enrolled in Yeomanry Corps they served throughout the rebellion of 1798, on which occasion the French effected a landing to assist the Rebels, and the suppression of the insurrection was in no small degree owing to the courage and loyalty of the Orange Yeomen. Again, in the year 1848, when another rebellion was threatened, the Orangemen came forward to assist, and were armed by the Government.

That an exclusively Protestant society could not exist in Ireland without incurring the animosity of the Roman Catholic Church goes

without saying. Calumnies of the vilest description have been and still are being brought forward against it, but in no case have these been substantiated.

The whole system of the Loyal Orange Institution is open and above board. It formed the subject of a Parliamentary inquiry in the year 1832, and came through the ordeal unscathed.

In the old days an oath of obligation was exacted, but since the year 1823 this has been abolished.

Any Protestant desirous of joining the Institution is proposed in a Lodge, balloted for, and, previous to coming forward for initiation, is provided with a copy of the Laws and Ordinances of the Institution, in which are set forth the Objects of the Institution and the Qualifications of an Orangeman. These are explained to him before he comes forward, and he is asked before Initiation if he has read them and had them explained to him. If there is anything he should consider in the slightest degree objectionable he is at perfect liberty to decline to proceed.

THE FOLLOWING IS TAKEN FROM THE

LAWS AND ORDINANCES

OF THE

ORANGE INSTITUTION OF IRELAND.

Basis of the Institution.

The Institution is composed of Protestants, united and resolved to the utmost of their power to support and defend the rightful Sovereign, the Protestant Religion, the Laws of the Realm, the Legislative Union, and the Succession to the Throne in the House of Brunswick, BEING PROTESTANT; and united further for the defence of their own Persons and Properties, and the Maintenance of the Public Peace. It is exclusively an Association of those who are attached to the religion of the Reformation, and will not admit into its Brotherhood persons whom an intolerant spirit leads to persecute, injure, or upbraid any man on account of his religious opinions. They associate also in honour of KING WILLIAM III., Prince of Orange, whose name they bear, as supporters of his glorious memory.

QUALIFICATION OF CANDIDATES.

The Master and Members of every Lodge into which a Candidate is proposed to be elected must satisfy themselves with all due solemnity previous to his admission that he possesses the following qualifications:

An Orangeman should have a sincere love and veneration for his Heavenly Father: an humble and steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, believing in Him as the only Mediator between God and man. He should cultivate truth and justice, brotherly kindness and charity, devotion and piety, concord and unity, and obedience to the laws; his deportment should be gentle and compassionate, kind and courteous; he should seek the society of the virtuous, and avoid that of the evil; he should honour and diligently study the Holy Scriptures, and make them the rule of his faith and practice; he should love, uphold, and defend the Protestant religion, and sincerely desire and endeavour to propagate its

doctrines and precepts; he should strenuously oppose the fatal errors and doctrines of the Church of Rome, and scrupulously avoid countenancing (by his presence or otherwise) any act or ceremony of Popish Worship; he should, by all lawful means, resist the ascendancy of that Church, its encroachments, and the extension of its power, ever abstaining from all uncharitable words, actions, or sentiments, towards his Roman Catholic brethren; he should remember to keep holy the Sabbath day, and attend the public worship of God, and diligently train up his offspring, and all under his control, in the fear of God, and in the Protestant faith; he should never take the name of God in vain, but abstain from all cursing and profane language, and use every opportunity of discouraging those, and all other sinful practices, in others; his conduct should be guided by wisdom and prudence, and marked by honesty, temperance, and sobriety; the glory of God and the welfare of man, the honour of his Sovereign, and the good of his country, should be the motive of his actions.

The Orange Institution is of a most democratic character, for the members of Private or Subordinate Lodges elect their own Officers, and these in their turn elect the District Officers, who select the Officers for the County, and these every year elect the Officers of the Grand Lodge, which is the Governing Body of the Order.

The Order is composed of men in almost every station in life. Landlords and Tenants, Farmers and Labourers, Lawyers, Doctors, Mechanics, Proprietors of large business concerns, Shipbuilders and Ship Carpenters, Artizans and their Employers —all are brothers and equal inside the four walls of an Orange Lodge.

Clergy of every Protestant Denomination are members of the Order, and His Grace the Lord Primate of All Ireland is one of the Grand Chaplains. The proceedings of every Orange Lodge are opened and closed with prayer, and the reading of a portion of Scripture.

A very large number of the Lodges are either Temperance or Total Abstinence Lodges.

A Temperance Lodge is one in which no funds of the Lodge are allowed to be spent in drink and no intoxicating liquor is permitted at the Lodge refreshment. In Total Abstinence Lodges the members are total abstainers. Under the County Grand Lodge of Belfast alone there are 55 Temperance and 25 Total Abstinence Lodges.

In connection with the Orange Institution is The Lord Enniskillen Memorial Orphan Fund, so called after a former Grand Master of the Order. There are a very large number of Orphans of deceased Orangemen on the Books at present. Belfast has an Orange Widows' Fund which is doing capital work, and many District and Private Lodges have self-contained Mutual Benefit Associations.

Under the recent National Insurance Act a Benefit Society has been

formed, called The Orange and Protestant Friendly Society. This society is not confined to Orangemen and their families, but all Protestants are welcomed of whatever denomination.

The Loyal Orange Institution exists wherever the Union Jack flies —from Canada to South Africa, in Australia, in New Zealand, and it flourishes also in the United States of America.

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